



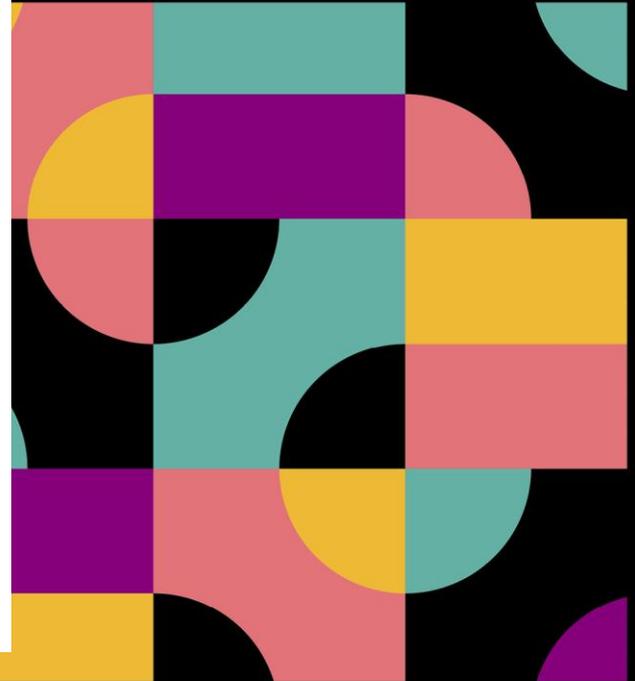
Pearson
Edexcel

GCSE (9-1) French, German and Spanish 2024

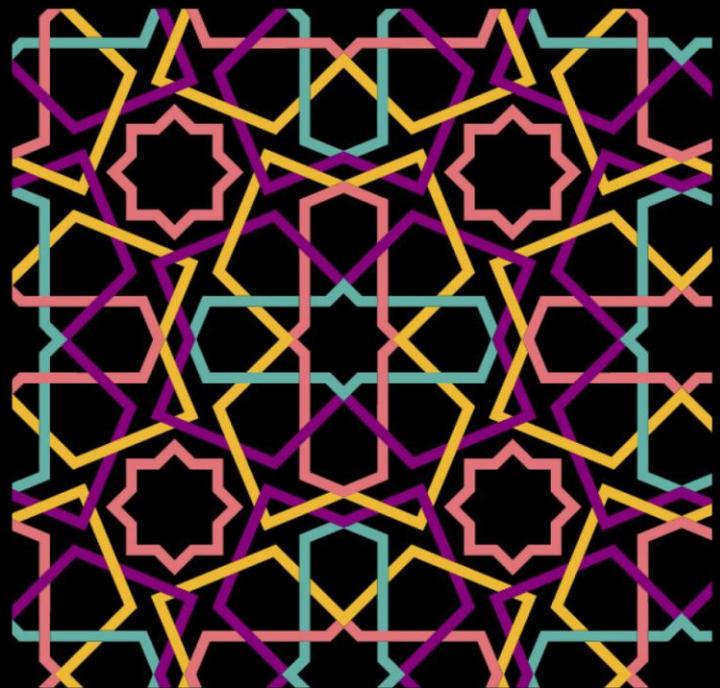
Frequently Asked Questions



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General FAQs

1. How are we ensuring that there will be consistency across the assessments for all 3 languages?

French, German and Spanish have been developed according to the same set of principles and guidelines. Vocabulary won't be exactly the same due to it being based on frequency and of course there will be cultural differences, but the requirements of the test will be exactly the same. The specification is the same for all languages.

2. Can we make tier decisions on the day of the examination?

No. It is not possible to make tier decisions on the day of the examination. Tier decisions will need to be made at the time of entry and Ofqual does not allow the choice of different tiers for different papers.

3. Can students re-sit individual papers?

All four papers are compulsory and the written examinations must be sat in one terminal session. Students wishing to re-sit the speaking component must re-sit the whole qualification. However, students wishing to re-sit only Papers 2, 3 and 4 (i.e. not the speaking component) may carry over the marks from the previous examination series for Paper 1 Speaking, provided this was assessed by formal exam.

4. Will the Reading and Listening papers be concurrent as is currently the case?

No. We have taken the decision to separate these exams based on feedback from both teachers and students alike. Please read this article about [Listening and Reading Exam Scheduling](#), for further information.

5. With this change to GCSE, are there plans to change the A level content?

At time of writing (August 2024), we have not heard anything about any possible changes to A level. We, as an awarding body, will keep you updated on any information that comes out from the DfE as well as support you in the transition from GCSE to A level.

6. What does “non-examined assessment” mean regarding the speaking assessment?

The speaking assessment is not carried out in the typical manner with all students sat together in a room at the same time to take the exam and is outside the usual ‘exam window’. However, it is still externally assessed.



For further administrative guidance, please refer to the administrative guidance document, which will be found under the 'Forms and administration' section of the language webpage.

7. What does SSC stand for?

SSC stands for 'sound-symbol correspondence' and knowledge and understanding of these will be assessed in both the read aloud task and the dictation part of the listening paper. This focusses on the relationship between the sound and writing systems of a language, evidenced by accurate pronunciation of written language in the read aloud task or accurate written rendering of the spoken language in the dictation.

8. What provisions are available for visually impaired students?

We have developed modified papers to cater for students with a range of accessibility requirements, including those with visual impairments.

All access arrangements and reasonable adjustment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Centres are advised to request modified papers for relevant students on [this Special Requirements webpage](#) by 31st January for the Summer examination series.

9. What support is available to help us understand the mark schemes better and how examiners will mark the papers?

The mark schemes for all papers are available in the Sample Assessment Materials for each language on our website: [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#).

We have also produced exemplars to demonstrate Pearson's approach to marking Speaking and Writing tasks and the dictation question in the Listening paper. These can be found here: [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#).

10. What grade boundaries should we use for mock exams?

Unfortunately, until a qualification has been sat for the first time it is not possible for us to provide grade boundaries. In order to generate reliable and accurate grade boundaries a paper needs to have been sat by a full cohort and have gone through our full examining and awarding processes. This means that at the time of any new specification being introduced, boundaries are not available until after first assessment. In this case, it means that boundaries will be available for the first time after results day in August 2026. For the interim period many centres will choose to report in percentages rather than predicting grades, as it is difficult to do with any degree of certainty. This is something that Heads of Department would need to discuss with their school leadership teams.



11. Will examWizard be available for this qualification?

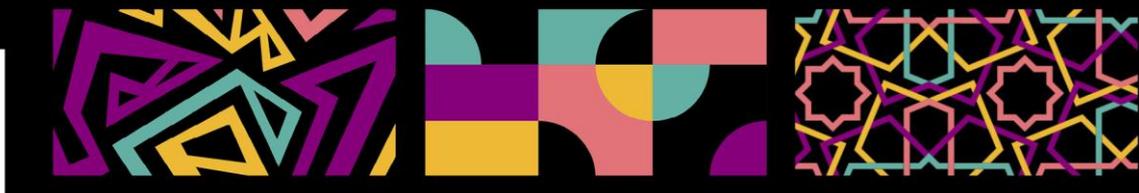
Yes, the Sample Assessment Materials are already available on examWizard and we will be adding the papers for each exam series after they have been sat.

12. Do you have vocabulary lists organised by subject?

We have produced mini vocabulary lists for each language, found here for [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#), which include 25 of the most relevant words for each subject from the full GCSE vocabulary list. However, the vocabulary in this specification is designed to be used fluidly across subjects and thematic contexts, so these mini vocabulary lists are not to be taken as indicative of where the vocabulary will appear in exam papers.

13. Are the task types in the exam papers for this qualification the same as the task types in the papers for the 2016 qualification?

The task types for this qualification are different and are exemplified in the Sample Assessment Materials on our website: [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#).



Paper 1 Speaking: Administration

1. Will there be support guides for both teachers and students?

Yes, we will create these as part of our support. There is a [written guide](#) and [video guide](#).

2. Will the administration such as using the digital sequencing tool and uploading be easy to follow?

Yes, there will be a digital sequencing tool to guide the teachers when students select the thematic context for the picture description and conversation. Further, all recordings will continue to be digitally uploaded as they are currently with clear guidance documents provided. More information on this will be sent to all teachers in plenty of time before 2025 mocks and 2026 live papers.

3. How long before the speaking assessments can we open the secure materials received from Pearson Edexcel?

You can open the materials **up to three working days** before the start of the prescribed assessment period. The materials will include both the teacher and student stimulus cards.

4. In what order should we assess students for the speaking paper?

You are free to assess students in whatever order you wish. Students do not have to be assessed in any particular order, for example by student number or surname.

5. How should we timetable the speaking exams?

The speaking exams should take place in the specified speaking exam 5 week window, which can vary each year owing to Easter, and they should take place on consecutive days. It might be easiest to timetable all speaking exams for one tier followed by all speaking exams for the other tier (to avoid confusion regarding sequencing and the stimulus materials), but you are free to timetable the speaking exams however you wish.

6. If the teacher-examiner thinks a stimulus card will cause distress for a particular student, does the teacher-examiner need to report this to Pearson Edexcel?

The subject matter of the stimulus cards should not cause distress to the student, but if the teacher-examiner believes that for a specific student distress may be caused, then there will be a facility on the digital sequencing tool to allow for a reallocation of stimulus cards.



7. Can the invigilator overseeing the preparation time help if a student does not understand one of the English words on the stimulus cards, e.g. ‘excursion’?

The invigilator must not support students with understanding the exam content, whether in English or the target language.

8. Can more than one student prepare for the speaking assessment in the same room at the same time?

The preparation time is supervised and must be overseen by an invigilator. Therefore, as long as students are seated at an appropriate distance from each other (as per standard examination conditions) and the invigilator ensures no interaction between students, then it is acceptable for multiple students to prepare for the oral in the same room. The invigilator must ensure that individual students do not exceed the total time allowed to them for preparation, and that the preparation time for each student takes place immediately prior to their speaking assessment.

9. During the preparation for the speaking exam, if the centre has one invigilator per student, is the student allowed to speak out loud during the 14 minutes’ preparation time?

No. There has to be parity across all centres, so for the first 14 minutes of preparation time the student must be silent.

10. What sort of notes can students make during their supervised preparation time?

Students are permitted to make notes relating to all tasks in whatever form they wish, provided that this does not exceed two sides of A4 in total.

Students may refer to their notes during their assessment.

They must hand in their notes at the end of the assessment when prompted by the teacher-examiner.

11. When do we start timing: when the teacher-examiner speaks for the first time or when the student speaks for the first time?

You should start timing from the moment the **student** begins reading the ‘read aloud’ task, for the purpose of the assessment. The practice of the read aloud should be timed separately, as it is the final 1 minute of the student’s preparation time.



12. What information do we need to include at the start of each recording?

At the start of the recording, you must include the following information:

- Language (e.g. French)
- Foundation Tier / Higher Tier
- Teacher-examiner name
- Student name
- Student number

13. Will all transitions in the speaking be in English?

Yes.

14. How should the teacher-examiner respond if the student asks a question other than the one(s) required by the role play?

In the Foundation Tier role play, students are required to produce one question. In the Higher Tier role play, students are required to produce two questions. If a student produces a question other than the one required, we recommend teacher-examiners respond to the question the student actually asks, giving an appropriate brief response, so that the response doesn't put the student off.

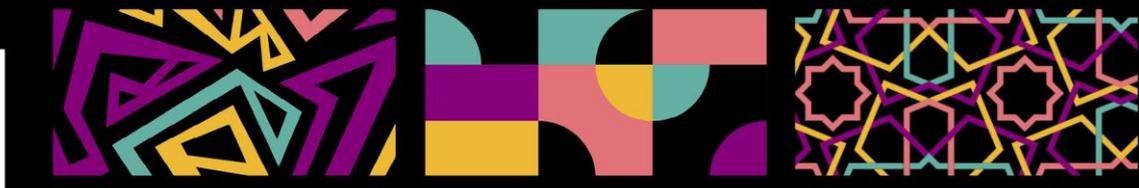
15. What if the teacher-examiner says something other than the questions or prompts in the role play or picture-based task, for example 'Ah oui?'

The teacher should keep to the wording of both the questions and prompts on the stimulus cards wherever possible. Failure to adhere to the prescribed wording will result in students not being credited for their response. However, expressions such as 'Ah oui' in response to what the student is saying are fine because they do not give students any advantage.

16. Can the teacher-examiner repeat or rephrase a question?

At any point in the exam, the teacher-examiner may repeat a question (or prompt in the picture-based task) twice, meaning that the teacher-examiner can ask any question/prompt a maximum of three times. A teacher-examiner may repeat a question or prompt whether or not a student has requested this.

Please note:



- Questions in the role play and follow-up questions in the read aloud and picture tasks **must only be asked exactly as written**, and must not be rephrased or supplemented by a different question.
- In the picture description task, teachers **may only use the permitted prompts exactly as written** to encourage the student to give a more thorough response. These prompts must not be rephrased or supplemented by a different prompt.
- In the conversation following the picture description and questions, the questions provided on the teacher-examiner card are **example** questions and **DO NOT have to be used** by the teacher-examiner. In the conversation the teacher selects their own questions appropriate to the content and ability of the student, and with the aim to ensure the student speaks about present, past and future experiences/desires. If the teacher-examiner asks a question that the student doesn't understand, they are free to rephrase it as they deem appropriate.

17. When will a student be able to select their thematic context for the picture description and conversation task?

The digital sequencing tool will open two weeks prior to the start of the speaking window (not including the Easter holidays) and will randomly allocate two of the six thematic contexts to each student in the cohort. Students must finalise their choice by the time the materials can be accessed (3 working days before the start of the speaking exam window – **NOT** 3 working days before the student's exam), but are recommended to select as soon as they can to give them as much preparation time as possible. When we release the dates of the speaking window each year, we will also state the date by which students should have selected their thematic context.

18. When a student is given their thematic context options two weeks prior to the speaking window, do they need to make a decision immediately?

The decision may be made later as long as it comes before the teacher or exams officer needs to sort out the correct cards at the point of opening the speaking materials 3 days prior to the window. The other important thing to bear in mind is the longer the student takes to decide, the less time they will have to prepare their chosen thematic context.

19. What must I do if a student announces just before their scheduled exam that they have chosen a different thematic context for the picture description and conversation, and not the one agreed previously?

While the thematic context for the picture task and conversation should be agreed with the student in the two weeks prior to the exam window and before the teacher-examiner has accessed the secure materials, we understand that last-minute changes can occur and we would not want this to place any undue stress on the student. We will be providing further guidance on the approach to take in the event of a student preparing a different thematic context to the one agreed.



20. Can the student memorise answers to the teacher-examiner’s questions for the conversation?

Students must not be given the teacher-examiner’s questions in advance of the speaking assessment. They will be assessed on the relevance of their response to the teacher-examiner’s questions, so memorising large sections of speech may prevent them from giving relevant responses.

21. For Task 3 – Conversation, can the teacher-examiner ask the same questions to each student?

For the conversation, the starter topic will vary for each of the 18 available cards, so teacher-examiners will need to vary the opening of the conversation. Following this, we would strongly recommend that you ask different questions to each student, listening carefully to the answers the student gives and developing the conversation accordingly. The questions you ask should give students the opportunity to use past, present and future tenses/timeframes and to use a wide variety of language.

If an examiner notes that a teacher-examiner or a centre uses exactly the same range of questions for all their students during the speaking exam, this may be referred to the malpractice team for investigation.

22. Does the conversation need to cover a certain number of thematic contexts?

No, there are no requirements around the number of thematic contexts to be covered. It is fine to stay within one thematic context for the duration of the conversation if this is of particular interest to the student, and it is also fine if the conversation naturally moves across multiple thematic contexts.

23. Does a student have to ask questions to reach the top band in the conversation mark schemes?

No, this is not needed in the 2024 specification. Students must respond to questions with relevant responses and develop their ideas where possible for AO1 and use a wide variety of vocabulary and grammatical structures with complex language and variety of timeframes in AO3.

24. Can the teacher-examiner repeat a question when they realise a student has responded incorrectly?

No – if a student answers a question incorrectly, the teacher must not repeat the question.



25. How strict are the timings for the speaking assessment as a whole?

The timings for the speaking assessment as a whole (7-9 minutes at Foundation tier; 10-12 minutes at Higher tier) are set by Ofqual and these should be adhered to as strictly as possible to give all students equal opportunity to demonstrate their speaking skills. However, there is no penalty for a student's assessment falling short of the 7-minute or 10-minute minimum. They will be assessed on the language they produce against the mark scheme for each task.

In the event of a student talking for more than the maximum required time, examiners will stop marking after 9 minutes (Foundation) or 12 minutes (Higher), unless the student is mid-sentence, in which case they will stop marking at the end of that sentence.

26. How strict are the timings for the individual speaking tasks?

The timings for the individual tasks are recommendations only. They are considered sufficient to access the full range of marks available for each task, but you may find that some students need more or less time than the recommended allocations to complete the different tasks. We do advise not going significantly over the recommended time for the first two tasks, otherwise the conversation may suffer as a result, but there is no penalty for exceeding the recommended time of any of the three tasks with the aim of bringing the assessment to a conclusion within the overall exam timings.

27. If a student completes the first two tasks more quickly than the recommended timings, should the conversation be extended to compensate?

No, it isn't necessary to extend the conversation beyond the recommended timings (3-3.5 minutes at Foundation tier; 5-5.5 minutes at Higher tier).

28. Does the teacher-examiner need to time the conversation task separately to the other tasks?

We would recommend checking your timer at the beginning of the conversation task so as to be aware of when they have reached the minimum recommended time, but as there is no longer a requirement to cover two topics equally as there was in the 2016 qualification, there is no need to set a separate timer for the conversation.

29. If the teacher-examiner realises they have made a mistake in conducting the assessment, such as missing out a question, what should they do?

If the task and/or assessment is completed and the recording stopped, we ask that a note be added on LWT when the file is uploaded, to inform us of the error. When in doubt, please contact us for advice.



30. When do speaking assessments have to be completed?

All speaking assessments must be conducted by centres within the five-week assessment period in April/May set by Pearson. The assessment period will be confirmed and communicated each year in the UK Information Manual. The assessment period will not always be continuous or be the same period each year, for example it may need to accommodate the Easter break, which changes each year.

31. Under what circumstances can a speaking assessment/recording be abandoned and restarted?

Examinations must not be stopped or abandoned unless there is an unavoidable emergency. In the event of an emergency, please ensure the relevant JCQ guidance is followed.

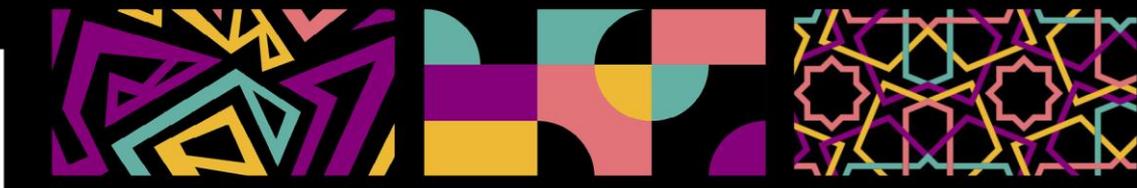
Where the student is eligible for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, the centre is advised to contact Pearson Edexcel directly at languagesassessment@pearson.com for further guidance.

32. If a student is severely distressed, what action should be taken?

To minimise the potential for students becoming nervous or stressed during the speaking assessment, teachers are encouraged to build in regular classroom opportunities to practise the different task-types that will be assessed. Increased familiarity with these tasks, experience of at least one 'mock' speaking assessment in examination conditions and a good grounding in grammar and vocabulary should help to alleviate their concerns. Students must be aware that the speaking assessment has been designed to allow them to show that they can communicate and interact spontaneously in the spoken target language and, to some extent, cope with unpredictable content.

However, in rare situations where a student is severely stressed (e.g. bursting out crying), the teacher-examiner should allow a short, supervised rest break for the student to compose themselves and then continue the assessment. If unable to do this, the recording must be stopped, and all assessment materials collected in from the student at this time. The student may be allowed time to recover, with supervision, and restart the test if the assessment can be restarted on the same day of the scheduled assessment. It is at the centre's discretion as to how to proceed in these circumstances:

- If most of the assessment had been completed prior to the student's distress (minimum of 5 minutes for Foundation Tier and 8 minutes for Higher Tier), the centre may consider submitting the recording for marking. In addition, the centre may consider applying for special consideration for the student if there is a clear and justifiable reason for the distress.
- If only a partial recording of the assessment has been undertaken at the time of the student's distress (under 5 minutes for Foundation Tier and 8 minutes for Higher Tier), the student must be encouraged to re-sit the assessment. If re-sitting, students must be provided with different stimulus cards for Tasks 1 and 2. For Task 1, the card must



not use the same thematic context as the conversation. For Task 3 an alternative picture task card relating to their thematic context should be selected – there are three cards per thematic context in every exam series.

33. If a student has severe anxiety and needs to leave the room during the speaking assessment, what action should be taken?

If the student is eligible for supervised breaks due to their specific special requirements, the teacher-examiner must pause the recording when the student exits the room. An invigilator must accompany the student at all times until the student returns to the examination room to re-commence the assessment. The teacher-examiner should keep a record of the supervised break, and ensure that the student has the opportunity to utilise the allowable time remaining.

34. If a student is absent for their scheduled speaking assessment due to illness, what action should be taken?

The student should take the assessment when they are well again. This must be within the speaking window. If this rescheduled assessment is the last in your centre, all recordings for your cohort should then be submitted via LWT within 48 hours.

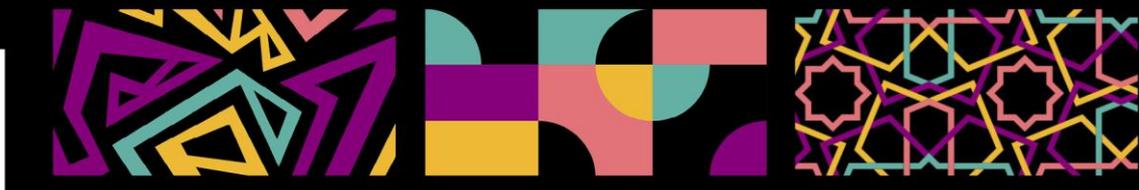
35. How will the allocation of cards be affected if a student is absent for their scheduled speaking assessment?

For the 2024 qualification, it won't affect other students as their specific read aloud, role play and picture task with conversation is already fixed and not dependent on a specific student order.

36. Would a student's use of gender-neutral language in speaking assessments be considered correct?

We are inclusive and support learners' use of their preferred ways of referring to themselves within the confines of the target language. If native speakers of a language support gender neutrality in a particular way, through the use of new pronouns for example, then our examiners will accept these when used by a student correctly and consistently – even though this usage may not always be recognised by some of the languages 'Academies' in certain countries.

Please see our [guidance on the use of gendered language in the specification](#) for more details and examples.



Paper 1 Speaking: Live Assessment

[Refer to the speaking guide for further information](#)

Preparation Time

37. Will we be able to print off the card allocations for students from the digital sequencing tool?

We intend to make this a feature of the digital sequencing tool.

38. Will students be in the same room as the teacher-examiner for the 1-minute read aloud practice? And will it be recorded?

Yes, students will be in the assessment room with the teacher for this part of the 15-minute preparation. The 1 minute of preparation time will be recorded but will not be assessed. The recording will then continue, without pause, as the teacher-examiner informs the student that the assessment will begin and invites them to read aloud for the first task of the speaking assessment.

Read aloud

39. In the read aloud task, are students allowed to self-correct?

Yes. The read aloud will be marked holistically, i.e. how well it is communicated as a whole.

40. For the read aloud, are the answers to the questions meant to be students' own responses/opinions about their experience, or about the text they have just read?

The answers should relate to the students' own experiences. This is not a comprehension exercise. The teacher-examiner will ask the students to hand back the read aloud stimulus card before they ask the two unknown questions.

41. Will the follow-up questions for the read aloud task be just opinion?

No, question 1 will always be a question about what the student likes (e.g. 'What do you like to do during school holidays?'), while question 2 will always be an opinion (e.g. 'What do you think about the idea of living abroad?').



42. Do the students get to see the two read aloud follow-on questions in their preparation time?

No, these questions are unprepared.

43. What if the students give an answer to the unseen questions that contains words from the read aloud passage they have read?

This is perfectly acceptable as they will no longer have the read aloud in front of them. They will be marked on whether their response to the question is 'fully' or 'partially' communicated.

44. Will a student be penalised for using a regional or non-European accent in the read aloud, provided that they are consistent in doing so?

No, this will be marked based on communication and students whose accents reflect, for example, Canadian French or a Latin American regional Spanish will not be penalised. Students should aim, however, to be consistent in their pronunciation. If, for example, they switched between Mexican Spanish and Spanish from Spain in terms of /s/ vs /th/ pronunciation, this might cause confusion and therefore break down the message.

45. Will a student be penalised for reading the read aloud too slowly or rewarded for reading it quickly?

No, there are no penalties nor any extra credit for speed of delivery.

Role play

46. In the role-play, what if a student says all their responses/prompts in one go rather than according to what the teacher-examiner says?

The mark criteria assesses whether the student's response to each teacher-examiner prompt is relevant and fully or partially communicated. Therefore, the teacher-examiner should continue to deliver each of their prompts to give the student the opportunity to repeat the relevant response for each prompt.

Picture description and conversation task

47. Do students talk about both pictures in the picture task?

No, the student must select and talk about one picture only.



48. For the picture task, does the student need to go beyond the vocabulary list to gain top marks?

No, students will be able to access the highest mark throughout all our papers without the need to use words beyond the vocabulary list.

49. In the picture task, are there any follow up questions as there are in the current assessment?

Not in the same way no; students will be asked two unseen follow-on questions. In foundation tier these questions will be present tense or conditional tense. In higher tier, the first question will be present tense/conditional tense and the second in the past tense. Each question will be worth 2 marks and assessed on communication.

50. Is the picture card marked separately to the conversation?

Yes, there are separate mark schemes for the picture description, the two follow-up questions and the conversation.

51. Does the conversation need to remain on the thematic context selected by the student?

No. The conversation can move freely from the starter subject, within the thematic context prepared by student and/or beyond. It is an opportunity for students to use a wide range of language to talk about aspects of the thematic context, as well as their own interests and experiences.

The intention for this part of the assessment is that it should flow in the style of a natural conversation. Teachers are encouraged to respond to what the student says, rather than use a pre-determined set of questions. There is no requirement for the teacher-examiner to remain within the one thematic context for the whole of the conversation. The conversation could stay within the thematic context or range across any thematic context.

The teacher-examiner has the freedom to develop the conversation however they think is most suitable to each student, bearing in mind that the student might feel most prepared to talk about the thematic context that they selected for this task.

52. What should I do if a student doesn't respond to the starter subject and begins talking about something unrelated to the chosen thematic context for the conversation?

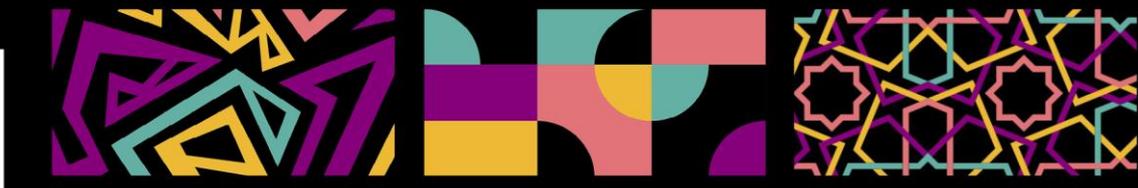
In this circumstance the teacher-examiner could reframe questions to ensure the student has attempted a response to the starter subject. We want to avoid a situation of students pre-learning an opening 'speech' that is not a response to what they have been asked. The students will be assessed on the relevance of their response to questions and at higher tier they can only gain full marks for AO1 if their responses are 'consistently relevant'. As the conversation continues, students may stay within the thematic context or



can direct the conversation into another thematic context.

53. What counts as ‘development’ in the conversation task?

‘Development’ refers to additional detail, reasoning, justification and/or elaboration on key points.



Paper 2 Listening: Administration

1. How do I access the recordings and transcripts for the listening examination?

Your centre will need to register for the Secure Download Service in advance of the actual examination date.

Digital (MP3) listening examination recordings will be made available for download from this secure service 24 hours before the scheduled examination, or on the preceding Friday if the examination is scheduled for a Monday. Please refer to the administrative support guide for more details.

2. My student has been granted 25% extra time. How should this be applied for the listening examination?

Mock examinations should provide a good indication of how the additional time would best serve the student. Depending on the student's needs, the extra time can be added at the beginning, at the end, or equally distributed across the questions.

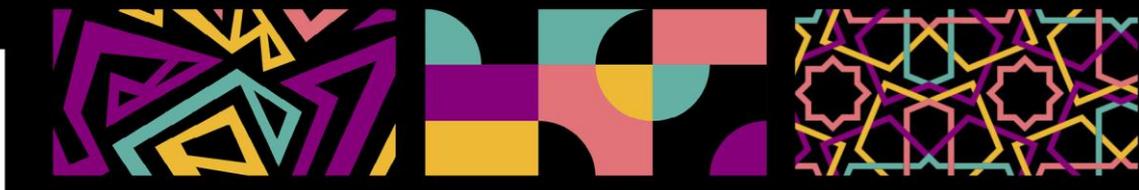
Additional recordings will be produced that incorporate the 25% extra time allowance, distributed across the questions, for students that formally qualify for this. The recordings must be requested in advance of the examination and downloaded via the Secure Download Service.

Centres may choose to make use of these additional recordings or to add in the extra time at the most appropriate moments for their student(s) by manually pausing and playing the original recording. Please remember that in the latter scenario, the invigilator should be the only person pausing and playing the recording.

Please refer to the administrative support guide for more information on downloading recordings from the Secure Download Service.

3. What do we do if the sound quality of the listening examination recording is unclear?

MP3 files downloaded from the Secure Download Service should not present any sound quality issues. However, if students report issues with the sound quality or recording during the examination, then the invigilator must make a note of the time of the issue, how long the issue lasted, and details of the questions impacted by the issue. Furthermore, the invigilator is required to make a full report of the incident in the examination room and of the action taken and send this information to Pearson Edexcel.



Paper 2: Listening: Live Assessment

[Refer to the listening guide for further information](#)

1. How do you define ‘moderate speed’ in the listening paper?

From DfE Subject Criteria:

understand spoken extracts comprising the defined vocabulary and grammar for each tier which are delivered at a pace which is no faster than a moderate pace, where each word is clearly discernible (as appropriate to pronunciation norms for each language), and which do not contain extraneous distractions or interruptions

2. Will there still be inference in the listening paper?

No, there won't be any more inference questions in the listening paper.

3. How is the dictation split between word gap fill and full sentences?

In Foundation tier, there will be three gap-filling exercises and three full sentences. For Higher tier, there will be two gap-filling exercises and four full sentences.

4. Will there be a bank of words which will be used in the dictation?

90% of the vocabulary used in the dictation task will be from the vocabulary list. This means that for Foundation tier **two words** will be from outside the vocabulary list and for Higher tier there will be **three words** from outside the vocabulary list.

5. Will alternative ways of rendering the SSCs in the dictation task be accepted?

Yes, if the word is recognisable and/or it is a word in its own right, even if the spelling is different, then a mark will be awarded for the word. For more information on this, please refer to the [French SAMs](#), [German SAMs](#) or [Spanish SAMs](#), where you will see exemplars and detailed marking guidance. (Links are for Higher Tier).

6. Will there be more content in the listening assessment as the time has increased?

Ofqual stipulates that the listening assessments of any awarding organisation must contain between 450-550 words at Foundation tier or 750-850 words at Higher tier. Therefore, the greater assessment time does not reflect more content, but more listening time. The extra time is to allow for the third listen to ensure the students have every chance to listen, write and check their answer.



7. Are only words from the vocabulary list used in the listening assessment?

This is the case apart from the dictation (as mentioned above), where 10% of the assessable words will be from outside the vocabulary list. This equates to two words at Foundation Tier and three words at Higher Tier.

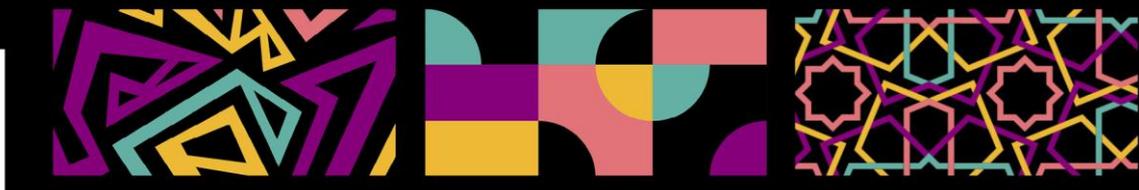
8. What form of each language will be used in listening recordings?

The language used in the recordings for the listening comprehension and dictation will be in the standard European pronunciation norm for each language, spoken by native speakers in clearly articulated speech. Whilst the rich variety of spoken forms of each language is acknowledged and a wide variety of cultural aspects are covered in our assessments, it is necessary to adopt a standard form of language for the fair assessment of listening comprehension.

For example, for dictation, the speaker will use the standard mainland Spain Castilian pronunciation norms, so they will need to understand /th/ pronunciation and how to render this in writing, even if this isn't the norm of pronunciation they use or hear day-to-day.

9. Do you have any guidance available on marking the dictation task?

We have published dictation exemplars for each language, found here for [French](#), [German](#) and [Spanish](#).



Paper 3: Reading

[Refer to the reading guide for further information](#)

1. Does the Reading paper still contain authentic literary texts?

There is no requirement to use literary texts and we have chosen, therefore, to avoid these. Texts have been created to reflect the following authentic reading scenarios:

- blogs, internet forums, advertisements, tourist brochures, newspaper or magazine articles, emails, extracts from a diary or school project.

We have tried to make these as authentic as possible while the examples are not taken from existing authentic sources.

2. There are coloured images in the Reading Sample assessment materials - will this be the case in the actual papers?

Yes. Pictures have been included to ensure students have equal access to the setting, and exposure to cultural concepts e.g. validating a train ticket. The images will provide helpful context, but will not provide support with any answers. Images are only used to support with understanding of cultural concepts.

3. Can you explain exactly what chunking means?

It means that the texts are broken up into smaller sections rather than always presented in one long piece of text/transcript. This was the result of research and trialling with many different students, who found having smaller sections of text more accessible.

4. What type of words are included in the up to 2% of glossed words outside the vocabulary list?

Any words may be used, but they will be conceptually appropriate for the student audience. The 2% of glossed words is at question level and any glossed words are clearly marked by an asterisk (*) with a definition in English at the bottom of the extract.

5. Will cognates be used in the reading paper?

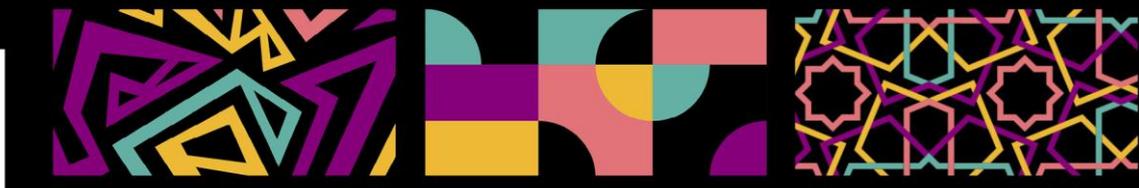
In addition to the glossed words, up to 2% of the total number of words in any given comprehension passage can be cognates from outside of the vocabulary list, and these are not glossed. Again, this 2% figure is calculated at question level.

6. Will there be inference questions still in the reading paper?

Not in the format that was encountered in the 2016 GCSE, where inference was linked to



the understanding of literary texts. In the new GCSEs, students will have to infer the meaning of a single word that is not on the vocabulary list, using their understanding of the words surrounding it. The question is formatted as a multiple choice of the most appropriate translation of the non-vocab list word, based on their understanding of the surrounding content.



Paper 4 Writing

Refer to the writing guide for further information

1. Can students answer both optional questions in the writing paper, instead of choosing one?

Students must follow the instructions in the paper and answer the correct number of questions. We strongly discourage students from answering both questions when presented with a choice of two: students are likely to produce two lower quality responses than if they focused on answering only one, and they will only receive the mark for one of their responses.

2. Are the bullet points going to appear in the same order every year?

Yes. However, students do not need to respond the bullet points in the order they are presented. Students must cover all the points to access the higher marks.

3. Will the bullet points always be just in English?

Yes. This is a development from the previous qualification that is designed to make the question easier to access for all students.

4. Does the register have to match the question type, i.e. formal or informal?

Students will be able to use either formal or informal forms of the language and will get equal credit for using either.

5. Do students need to write equal amounts across the bullet points?

No. This isn't necessary as long as they cover all the points.

6. Will students be penalised for choosing to answer more than one question on the same thematic context?

No, there is no penalty for this.

7. Do examiners stop marking after the word count limit is reached? Is there a penalty for exceeding the limit?

Our word counts are recommendations and students should be guided by these. We do not recommend that students significantly exceed the word count as this can often prove counterproductive; time may be better spent checking work.

If students do exceed the word count guidance, all work produced will be marked and no



automatic cut off or penalty will be imposed.

8. Would a student's use of gender-neutral language in the writing paper be considered correct?

We are inclusive and support learners' use of their preferred ways of referring to themselves within the confines of the target language. If native speakers of a language support gender neutrality in a particular way, through the use of new pronouns for example, then our examiners will accept these when used by a student correctly and consistently – even though this usage may not always be recognised by some of the languages 'Academies' in certain countries.

Please see our [guidance on the use of gendered language in the specification](#) for more details and examples.